

AFRO SAMURAI®



TAKASHI OKAZAKI

2

A TOR/SEVEN SEAS BOOK

AFO SAMURAI®

VOLUME 2



TAKASHI
OKAZAKI

AFRO SAMURAI®

VOLUME 2

story & art by Takashi Okazaki



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AFRO SAMURAI VOL. 2
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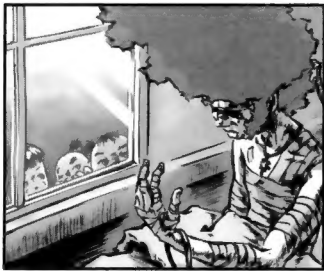
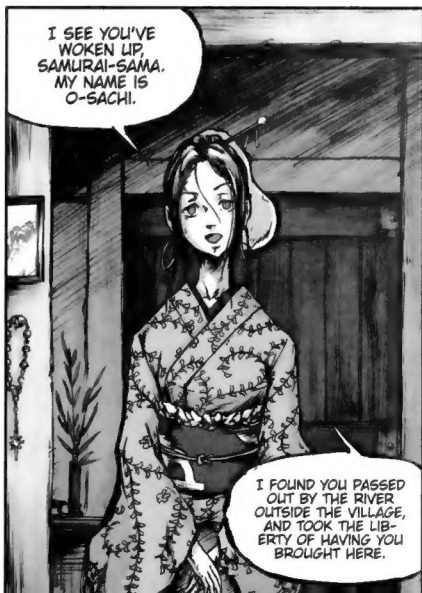
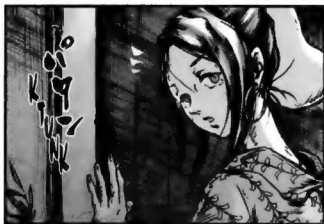


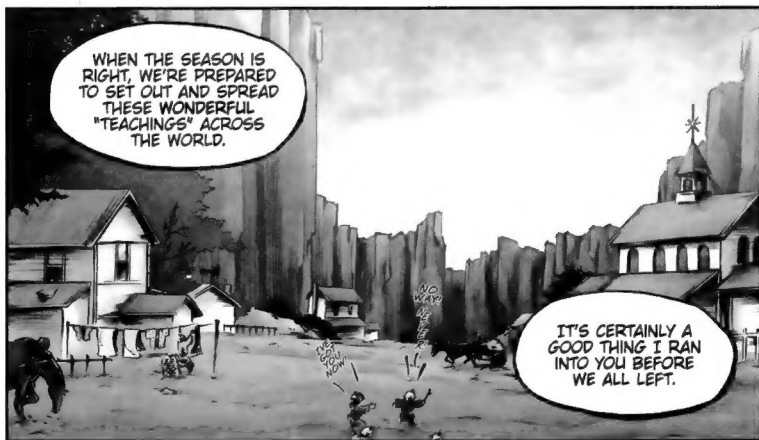
AFO SAMURAI

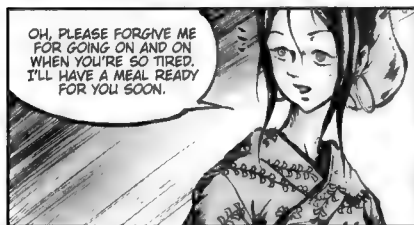
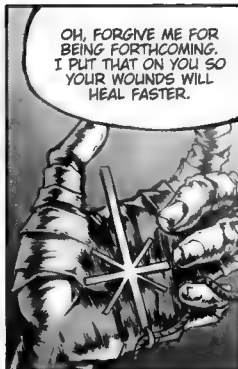
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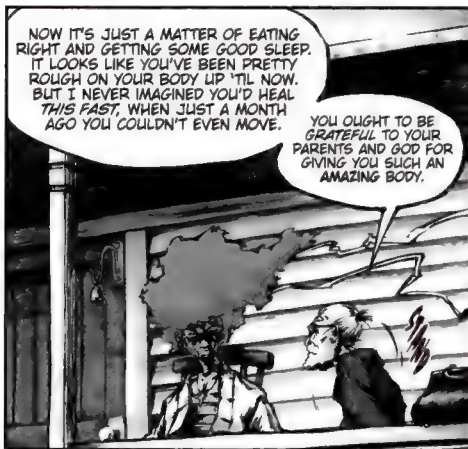








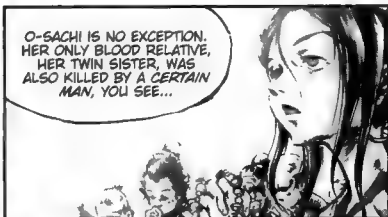




YOU'RE JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE WAS BEFORE THEY CAME HERE. NOBODY HERE LIKES TO TALK ABOUT THEIR PAST, BUT EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US ARRIVED HERE BEARING THE BURDEN OF A TERRIBLE ONE.



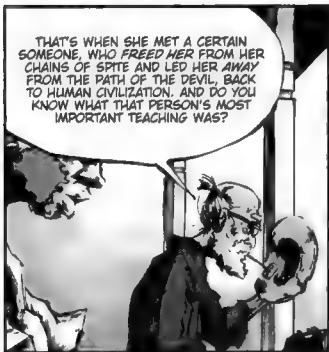
O-SACHI IS NO EXCEPTION. HER ONLY BLOOD RELATIVE, HER TWIN SISTER, WAS ALSO KILLED BY A CERTAIN MAN, YOU SEE...



SHE WENT ON A HELLISH JOURNEY TRYING TO SEEK REVENGE.



THAT'S WHEN SHE MET A CERTAIN SOMEONE, WHO FREED HER FROM HER CHAINS OF SPITE AND LED HER AWAY FROM THE PATH OF THE DEVIL, BACK TO HUMAN CIVILIZATION. AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT PERSON'S MOST IMPORTANT TEACHING WAS?



"FORGIVENESS."



FIRST, YOU MUST FORGIVE YOURSELF FOR YOUR OWN SINS. ONLY THEN CAN YOU CAN FORGIVE OTHERS.



A WORLD WHERE ALL PEOPLE FORGIVE EACH OTHER IS NOTHING SHORT OF IDEALISTIC, BUT IF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRYING TO ACTUALIZE THAT IDEAL INCREASES BY JUST ONE, PERHAPS THAT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

DON'T YOU THINK SO? HEH HEH.



IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, YOU OUGHT TO JOIN US ON OUR JOURNEY. I'M SURE O-SACHI WOULD BE DELIGHTED.





LOOKS LIKE YOU
BEEN MAXIN' AND
RELAXIN', NO. 2.



I'VE NEVER SEEN
YOU LOOK SO OFF-
GUARD BEFORE.
HEHEHEH.



DAMN, MAN. PEOPLE
ARE SO NICE HERE IT'S
ALMOST DISGUSTIN'.

SOUNDS LIKE THAT
"CERTAIN SOMEONE"
IS ONE HELL OF A
GUY, HUH?



I BET YOU'LL MAKE
PLENTY OF NEW FRIENDS
JUS' LIKE YOUR GIRL
HERE. HEHEHEHE.



TCH, THEY'RE
BACK ALREADY.



PEACE OUT, NO. 2.
HEHEHEH.



SORRY I'M
BACK SO LATE.

WE'LL BE GOING OUT
AGAIN TO PREPARE FOR
OUR COMING JOURNEY,
BUT LET ME JUST
MAKE YOU SOME
SUPPER FIRST.





TODAY IS THE DAY
THAT YOU FOUR
BOYS BECOME MEN.

UNTIL NOW, I HAVE
LOOKED AFTER YOU
AS A FATHER, BUT AS
OF TODAY YOU ARE
ALL ADULTS.



SWORD FIGHTING WAS THE ONLY
THING I WAS ABLE TO TEACH YOU,
BUT NOW I ASK THAT YOU
CONTINUE TRAVELING THE PATH THAT
YOU BELIEVE IN. I WILL NOW GIVE
TRUE SWORDS TO EACH OF YOU.
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOW
YOU USE THEM.



JINNOSEKI
COME FORWARD.

YES, SIR.



I RECEIVED THESE TWO
KATANA FROM MY FRIEND,
YOUR FATHER, JINTARO.

CONTINUE FORTH IN
YOUR DEVOTION TO
YOUR TRAINING.

YES, SIR.

DAIGO, KAZUMA,
COME FORWARD.

YES, SIR!

YES, SIR!

THESE WAKIZASHI HAVE
BEEN PASSED DOWN
AND WIELDED BY MANY
GREAT SWORDSMEN.
ACCEPT THEM.

AFRO, COME
FORWARD.

YES, SIR...

YOU WERE CLUTCHING ONTO
THIS LONG, HEFTY BLADE
WHEN I FOUND YOU. YOU HAVE
ACQUIRED THE SKILLS TO USE
SUCH A WEAPON. NOW YOU
MUST FOLLOW THE PATH THAT
IS YOUR DESTINY.

WELL, WHAT SAY WE
CONCLUDE ALL THIS
FORMAL CRAP AND GET
ON WITH THE FESTIVITIES,
EH, OTSURU?

OKAY.

AHH, IT'S OVER!
LET'S MOVE
IT SO WE CAN
EAT!

OH DEAR, I MUST SAY, BIG
OTSU'S APPETITE REALLY IS
SLIGHTLY PERPLEXING. THE
SACRAMENT OF MANHOOD
ISN'T ABOUT...

MAN, SO MUCH
FOR BEING FULL-
FLEDGED ADULTS.

HEY, AFRO...



AFRO, WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
OUT HERE?



SORRY, I THINK
I DRANK A LITTLE
TOO MUCH...

IT LOOKS LIKE
MASTER IS ALREADY
GETTING READY
FOR BED.



AND WE'VE GOT TO
HELP CARRY BIG
BOY AND KAZUMA,
SO COME ON.



OTSURU...



TOMORROW, I'LL BE THE
FIRST TO LEAVE THIS PLACE.
I WON'T BE ABLE TO RETURN
FOR A LONG TIME.



SO YOU CAN'T
FORGET ABOUT
YOUR FATHER
AFTER ALL...



NO...

I'M SORRY, OTSURU.
I'VE TRIED TO FORGET
ABOUT REVENGE--ABOUT
MY FATHER--BUT I CAN'T.

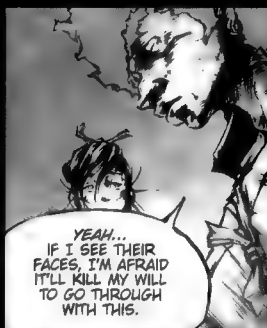


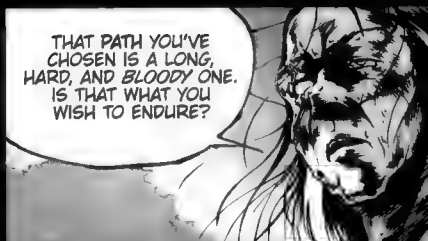
I'M LEAVING ON A
JOURNEY, BUT MY
LOVE FOR YOU WILL
NEVER CHANGE.



I'LL COME BACK FOR
SURE. OTSURU, WILL
YOU WAIT FOR ME
UNTIL THEN?







MY, MY! MR. GROWN-UP!
ARE YOU SURE NOW'S THE
TIME TO BE GOING OUT AND
GETTING REVENGE?!

SHACK

JUST DO WHAT
YOU'VE GOT TO
DO AND THEN GET
YOUR ASS BACK
HERE, AFRO!

I SWEAR IT!

IT'S A PROMISE!

GRIP

DO YOU THINK
HE'LL REALLY
MAKE IT BACK
HERE ON HIS
OWN?

YES, HE'LL BE FINE.
HE'LL BE BACK
HERE SOMEDAY.



PHEW! ALL
FINISHED. BUT
LOOK HOW LATE
IT IS.

IT'S SURE A GOOD
THING WE GOT
AFRO TO HELP US
OUT, THOUGH.



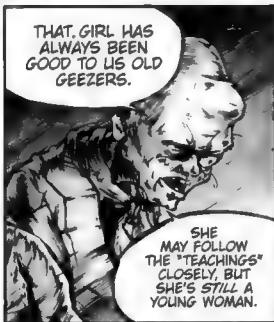
HUH? SAY,
WHERE IS HE? AND
O-SACCHAN?

HEH
HEH HEH...
WELL, YOU
KNOW.



THAT GIRL HAS
ALWAYS BEEN
GOOD TO US OLD
GEEZERS.

SHE
MAY FOLLOW
THE "TEACHINGS"
CLOSELY, BUT
SHE'S STILL A
YOUNG WOMAN.



LET'S LET HER
TAKE HER TIME
TONIGHT.

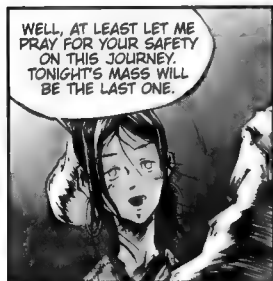
HEH HEH,
YOU SAID IT.



AFRO-SAMA?

EVERYBODY'S
GETTING READY
TO...





TODAY MARKS OUR PARTING
WITH THIS CHURCH AS WELL.
YOU SEE, THE PEOPLE OF THIS
VILLAGE BUILT IT TOGETHER
TO HOUSE A MAGNIFICENT
STATUE OF "THE ONE."

BUT IDOL WORSHIP IS
FORBIDDEN ACCORDING TO
THE TEACHINGS, SO WE'LL
BE BURNING IT BEFORE WE
SET OUT ON OUR JOURNEY.
IT'S UNFORTUNATE, BUT IT
CAN'T BE HELPED.

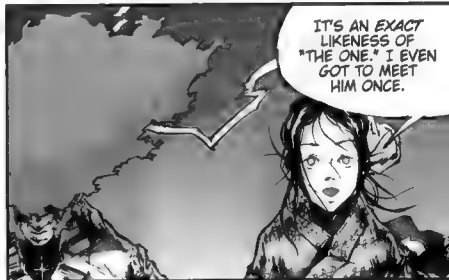
WE'LL BE SETTING
FIRE TO THIS CHURCH
IN A LITTLE WHILE.
EVERYONE'S GOING
TO GATHER AROUND IT
AND DRINK THE NIGHT
AWAY.

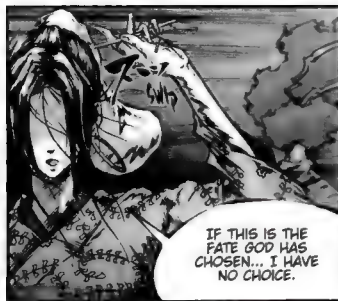
BUT BY KEEPING
THIS SYMBOL ON
OURSELVES, WE WILL
ALWAYS BE ABLE TO
FEEL THE PRESENCE OF "THE ONE"
AROUND US.

SURELY HE WILL
LIGHT THE PATH
YOU WALK AS WELL,
AFRO-SAMA.

PLEASE,
STEP INSIDE.

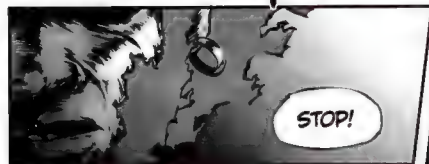
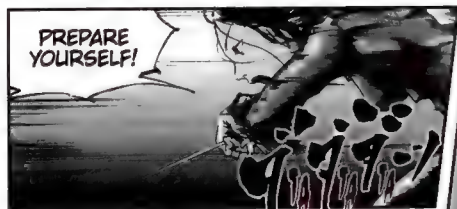
ALLOW ME TO TAKE
THE LIBERTY OF
PRAYING FOR YOUR
SAFE RETURN TO
OUR VILLAGE.

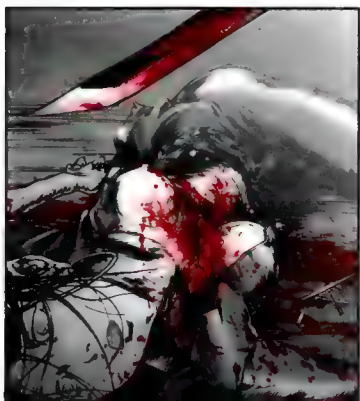


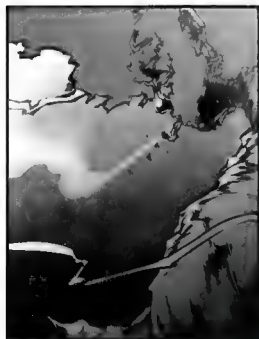
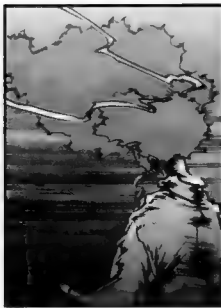


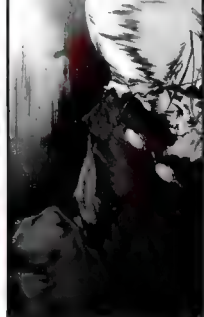
I MUST GO AGAINST
THE TEACHINGS, FOR
THE SAKE OF FUTURE
GENERATIONS!

THIS MAN IS
BOUND BY HIS
PAST...













END OF #06



AERO SAMURAI

#07








SO YOU SAW HIM...
BUT HAVE YOU TALKED
TO HIM ABOUT "IT"
YET?

NO.



IT'S LIKE HE'S
COMPLETELY CHANGED
FROM HOW HE WAS
IN THE OLD DAYS...
I COULDN'T BRING
MYSELF TO SAY
ANYTHING TO HIM.



WHERE IS HE
NOW?



DON'T WORRY, OTSURI.
HE'S PROBABLY JUST NERVOUS
AFTER COMING HOME FOR
THE FIRST TIME IN AWHILE.
HE'LL BE BACK TO HIS
USUAL SELF AFTER
HE'S HAD A CHAT WITH
MASTER.



HE WENT STRAIGHT
INTO MASTER'S
ROOM AND HASN'T
COME OUT.



YEAH!
I CAN'T BELIEVE
HE JUS' SHOWED
UP LIKE THAT!
THAT'S SO COOL!
THAT'S SO AFRO!!



HA HA HA, FOR SURE!
NOW LET'S HURRY UP
AND GET THIS PARTY
READY BEFORE THE SUN
GOES DOWN!

YEAH, I'LL BLOW
AFRO'S MIND WITH
MY CULINARY SKILLS,
JUST YOU WAIT!
HAHAHA!!





I GET THE IMPRESSION
YOU AREN'T HERE TO
CELEBRATE MY BIRTHDAY,
AFRO.



WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN
DOING FOR THE PAST
FIVE YEARS SINCE YOU
LEFT THIS MOUNTAIN?
I SUSPECT YOU HAVE
KILLED MANY PEOPLE.



DURING MY TRAVELS,
I DISCOVERED THAT A CERTAIN
ITEM WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER
TO EXACT MY REVENGE.
I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR
ITS OWNER. KILLING PEOPLE
TO STAY ALIVE ALL THE
WHILE.



I SEE...
I IMAGINED THIS
DAY WOULD
COME.



BUT I'M IMPRESSED
YOU'VE MADE IT
THIS FAR, AFRO.

DURING MY TIME AWAY, I
ENCOUNTERED A MUTILATED
WARRIOR WHO TOLD ME
WHERE I COULD FIND IT.
YOU SHOULD KNOW HIM AS
WELL, MASTER.

HE TOO WAS ON A
JOURNEY, SEEKING
REVENGE ON A CERTAIN
MAN...BUT HE DIED BEFORE
HE COULD REACH HIS
GOAL. THAT CERTAIN MAN
WAS YOU, MASTER.

REALLY...?
SO HE'S DEAD...

SUCH IS THE
FATE OF THOSE
WHO LIVE BY THE
SWORD, AS I'M
SURE YOU KNOW.

SO IT'S REALLY
HERE.

YES.
THE OBJECT YOU
ARE AFTER...

...IS RIGHT
HERE.



SORRY FOR LEAVING IT
ALL UP TO YOU, BIG BOY.
I GOT ALL NOSTALGIC
AND WANTED TO CLEAR MY
HEAD FOR A LITTLE WHILE.



MAN, YOU KNOW
CHOPPING WOOD IS
SUPPOSED TO BE
YOUR JOB! I'VE GOT
MY OWN CHORES TO
TAKE CARE OF!



SORRY,
SORRY!

EH, IT'S OKAY. YOU
HAVEN'T BEEN HOME
IN AWHILE, SO I'LL
LET IT GO...*THIS*
TIME.



SAY, BIG BOY,
KEEP DOING
THAT AND LISTEN
TO ME.

I FELT A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS,
SO I TOOK A LOOK AROUND
THE PROPERTY. THERE'RE
ABOUT TEN NASTY-LOOKING
GUYS HIDING OUT IN THE
WOODS.



IT LOOKED LIKE
THEY WERE TRYING
TO EXAMINE THE
LAYOUT OF THE
HOUSE.

AND CONSIDERING
THE *TIMING*, THEY
MUST BE AFTER
AFRO.



WHERE'S OTSURLI?

OH, UM... SHE WENT
UP THE MOUNTAIN
TO HANG OUT THE
CLOTHES A BIT
AGO...

OKAY, SHE
SHOULD BE FINE
FOR NOW THEN.

SO WHAT'RE
WE GONNA DO,
BROTHER JIN?

YEAH,
WE COULD...
BUT WE CAN
GET THE DROP
ON THEM.

YOU DON'T EXPECT
THE TWO OF US TO...?
I'VE NEVER KILLED ANY-
ONE IN MY WHOLE LIFE.
MAYBE WE SHOULD
JUST CALL MASTER
AND AFRO?

DON'T WORRY,
BIG BOY. *THIS* IS WHY
WE LEARNED HOW
TO USE A SWORD.



I KNEW THIS DAY WOULD
COME EVER SINCE I
LEARNED YOU WERE
AFTER NO. 1.

忍

MASTER,
I BEG OF YOU...
PLEASE ENTRUST
THAT TO ME.

I WILL NOT.

THIS IS NO TOOL
FOR YOU TO JUST
USE WHENEVER YOU
WANT TO CARRY
OUT A PERSONAL
VENDETTA.

IF THIS IS WHAT
YOU'RE AFTER, YOU
MUST UNDERSTAND
WHAT IT IS.

LEGEND TELLS THAT THE BEARER
OF THE NO. 1 HEADBAND IS ABLE
TO BECOME A GOD. IN CHASING
AFTER THIS VAGUE *PROMISE*
OF POWER, MEN HAVE WAGED
BATTLES AND SLAUGHTERED EACH
OTHER FOR AGES. INDEED, THIS
HEADBAND IS TO BLAME FOR THE
MOST DESPICABLE OF ACTS
COMMITTED ON THIS EARTH.

AND NOW IT HAS FALLEN
INTO MY HANDS AND GONE
FORGOTTEN BY MANKIND.
THIS DREADFUL OBJECT.
MY DUTY IS SIMPLY TO KEEP
IT IN THE DARKNESS.

AND IT'S A DUTY ON WHICH I
WOULD STAKE MY OWN LIFE.
I WILL CUT DOWN ANY MAN
WHO DESIRES THIS OBJECT,
WITHOUT HESITATION.

EVEN IF...

...THAT MAN
IS YOU.

AFRO, YOU
MUST MAKE A
CHOICE.

TO FORGET
ABOUT REVENGE
AND RETURN TO
THE PATH OF
MEN...

OR TO CUT
ME DOWN AND
CONTINUE ON A
PATH OF CARNAGE!

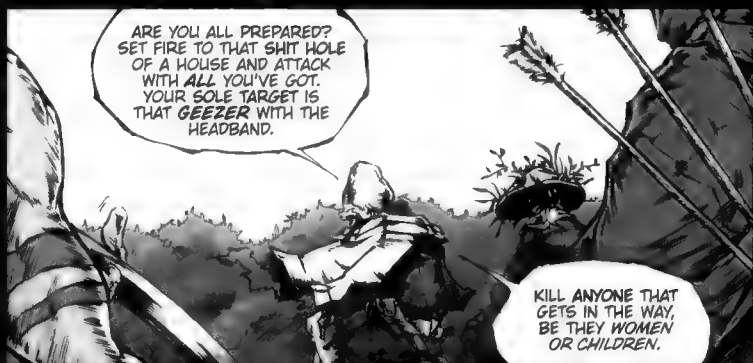
SHRN!



HEH HEH... BINGO.
WE WERE RIGHT
TO MAKE THAT BOY
OUR TARGET.

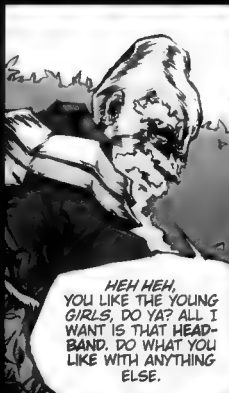


ARE YOU ALL PREPARED?
SET FIRE TO THAT SHIT HOLE
OF A HOUSE AND ATTACK
WITH **ALL** YOU'VE GOT.
YOUR **SOLE** TARGET IS
THAT **GEEZER** WITH THE
HEADBAND.



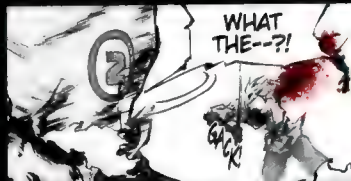
KILL ANYONE THAT
GETS IN THE WAY,
BE THEY WOMEN
OR CHILDREN.

SAY, LORD TWO,
YOU MIND IF I HELP
MYSELF TO THAT
FINE PIECE OF ASS
WE JUST SAW?



HEH HEH,
YOU LIKE THE YOUNG
GIRLS, DO YA? ALL I
WANT IS THAT HEAD-
BAND. DO WHAT YOU
LIKE WITH ANYTHING
ELSE.











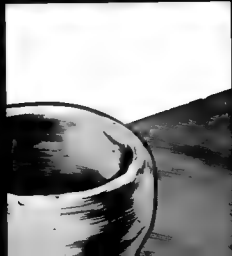
IT SEEMS A COMMOTION
IS BUILDING OUTSIDE.
DISASTER FOLLOWS AFTER
THOSE WHO SOW THE
SEEDS OF TRAGEDY.

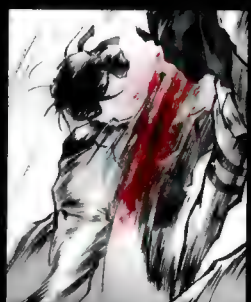


NO TIME FOR
HESITATION,
AFRO.



WHOSE DRAW IS
FASTER? MINE,
OR YOURS?







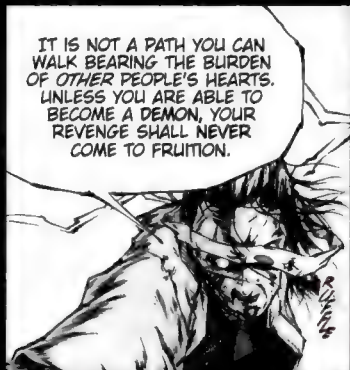
YOUR PATH IS
DECIDED, AFRO.



CLAK



IT IS NOT A PATH YOU CAN
WALK BEARING THE BURDEN
OF OTHER PEOPLE'S HEARTS.
UNLESS YOU ARE ABLE TO
BECOME A DEMON, YOUR
REVENGE SHALL NEVER
COME TO FRUITION.



AFRO, THIS IS THE
PATH YOU HAVE
CHOSEN. YOU CAN
NEVER LOOK BACK!



GYACK!

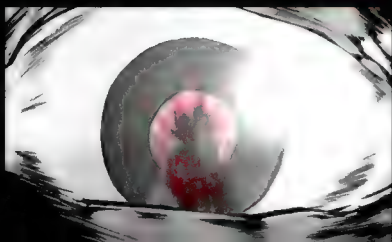


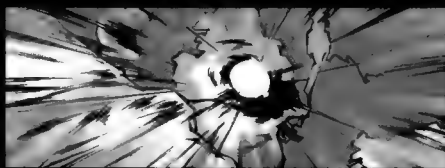
MASTER!
AFRO!



SWIPE

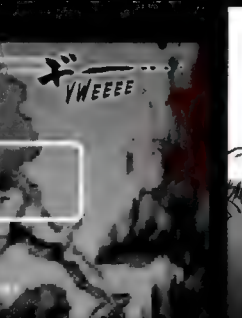






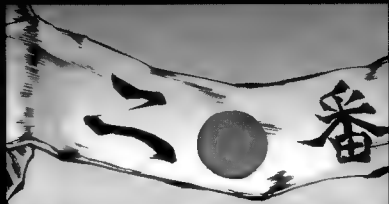


THAT BASTARD HAS
SOME SKILL. HE'S
CHANGED QUITE A
BIT SINCE LAST TIME
WE MET...



TCH...
I SUPPOSE WE
MAY HAVE TO
REGROUP AND TRY
AGAIN LATER.











AIGHT, SO, YOU GOT A RIGHT TO CHALLENGE NO. 1, AND YOU'VE GOT A DUTY TO CHALLENGE THOSE WHO CHALLENGE YOU. AND AS SOMEONE WHO LIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN MAN AND GOD, YOU SHALL LOSE YOUR HUMAN NAME AND INHERIT THIS ONE: "NO. 2."



WHO ARE YOU?



HEHEH... DAMN IF I KNOW. I JUST POPPED UP ALL IN HERE TO TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW. I DON'T SUPPOSE IT REALLY MATTERS WHO I AM. WHAT MATTERS IS...




...I KNOW ALL 'BOUT
WHERE YOU NEED TO
BE HEADED, AIGHT?
HEHEHEH...



WHERE IS
NO. 1?!




YO! WHAT THE
HELL? GIT YO' DAMN
HANDS OFF ME,
NO. 2.



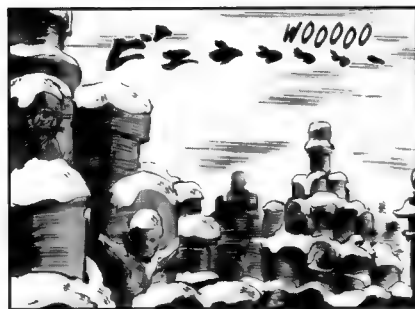
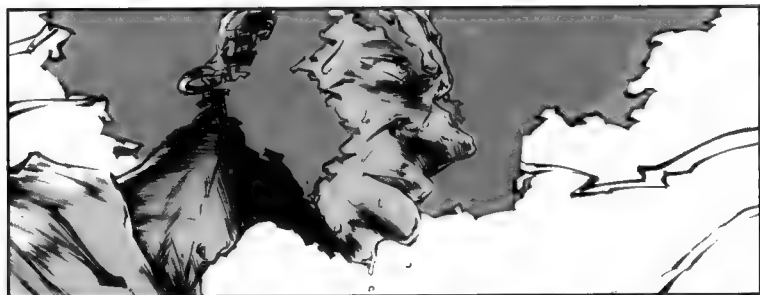
MAN, I CAN KILL YOU
AT ANY TIME, ASSUMIN'
THAT'S WHAT I'M
SUPPOSED TO DO.



BUT I WON'T.
I JUST DON'T
FEEL LIKE IT.
HEHEHEH...



THAT, AND, THE REASON
I EXIST IS TO TAKE YOU TO
"THAT PLACE." IT'LL BE A
LONG JOURNEY, THAT'S FO'
SHO'. MIGHT AS WELL PLAY
NICE WITH EACH OTHER,
NO. 2. HEHEHEH...





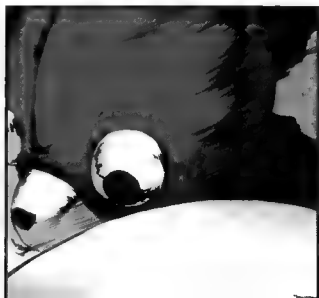
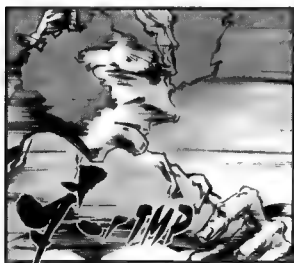


AFO SAMURAI

#08

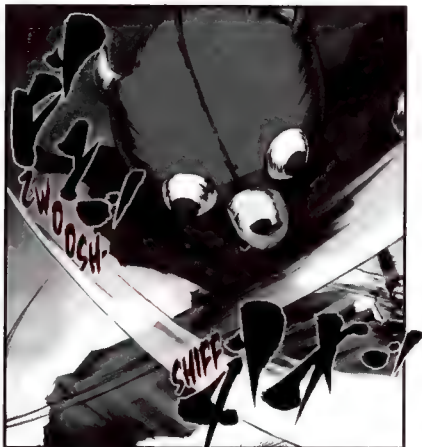




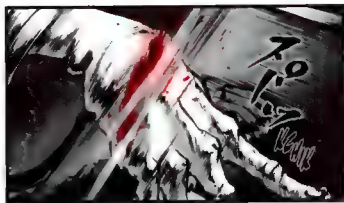


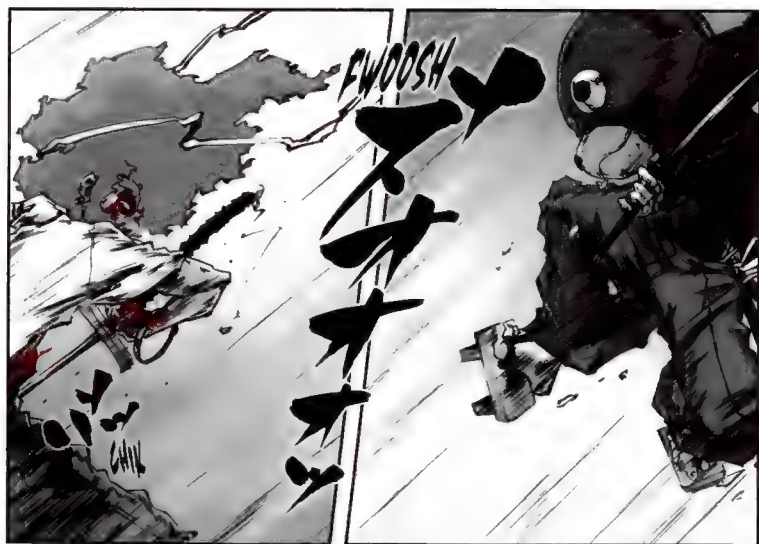


HMPH.
YOU'RE VERY
DISAPPOINTING.

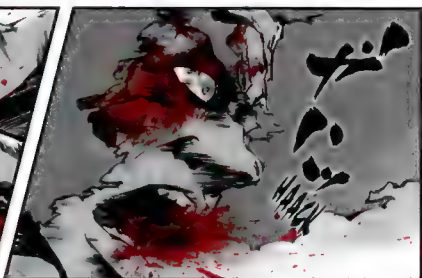


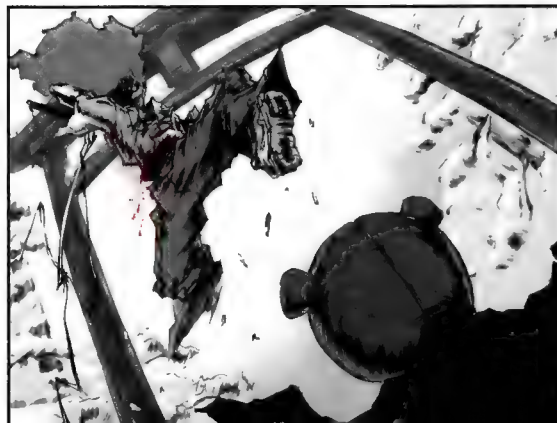
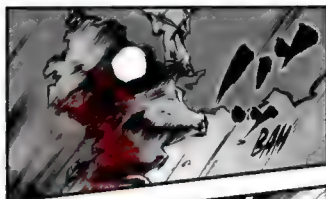
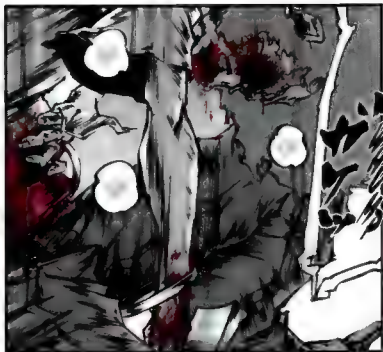
WHAT'S WRONG,
NO, Z?
CAN'T TAKE
IT?!!

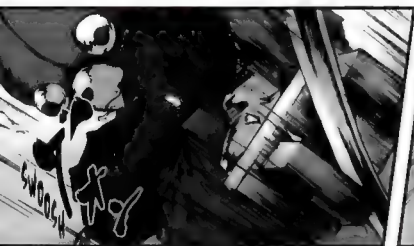














I KNOW YOU
KNOW WHO I
AM, NO. 2.



I KNOW YOU KNEW IT WHEN
WE MET AT TECCHISEN.
YOU'RE JUST LYING TO
YOURSELF SO YOU CAN
TRY AND JUSTIFY YOUR
ACTIONS.



YOU JUST SLASH
AWAY AT ANYTHING
THAT GETS IN YOUR
WAY, WITHOUT EVER
THINKING OF THE SINS
YOU'VE COMMITTED.

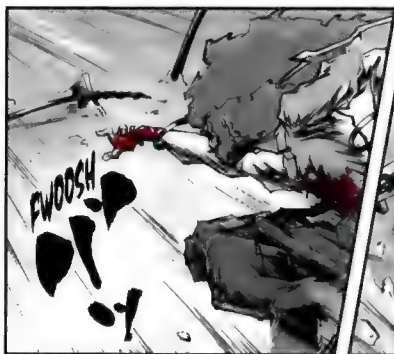


AFTER ALL...



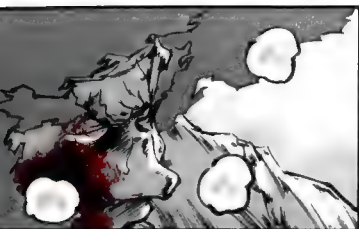
THAT'S THE
KIND OF MAN
YOU ARE!





THERE'S THAT
KILLER INSTINCT
I'VE BEEN LOOKING
FOR. NOW, LET'S
DO THIS.

BUT FIRST,
LET ME GIVE
YOU A TASTE
OF REALITY.



DON'T HIDE
YOUR EYES FROM
IT, NO. 2.

I BELIEVED YOU
WERE MY TRUE
BROTHER ONCE.



AND IT WAS
YOU WHO TOOK
EVERYTHING FROM
ME!

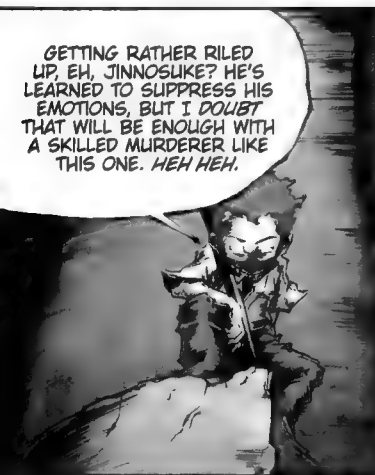




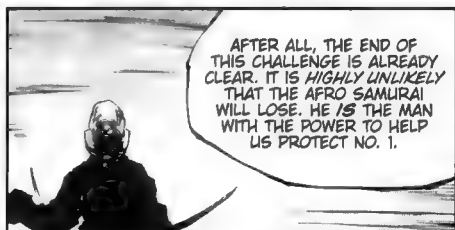
THIS ISN'T JUST
A DUEL BETWEEN
NO. 2 AND SOME
BEAR-HEADED
FREAK...

IT'S BETWEEN
JINNO SUKE
AND AFRO, TWO
BROTHERS WHO
ONCE LOVED EACH
OTHER!

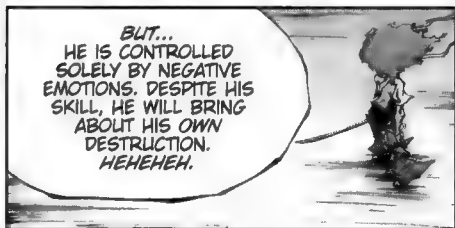
THE PATHETIC BODY
YOU SEE BEFORE
YOU IS REASON
ENOUGH TO WANT
REVENGE! DO YOU
SEE IT, AFRO?!



GETTING RATHER RILED UP, EH, JINNOBUKE? HE'S LEARNED TO SUPPRESS HIS EMOTIONS, BUT I DOUBT THAT WILL BE ENOUGH WITH A SKILLED MURDERER LIKE THIS ONE. HEH HEH.



AFTER ALL, THE END OF THIS CHALLENGE IS ALREADY CLEAR. IT IS *HIGHLY UNLIKELY* THAT THE AFRO SAMURAI WILL LOSE. HE *IS* THE MAN WITH THE POWER TO HELP US PROTECT NO. 1.



BUT...
HE IS CONTROLLED SOLELY BY NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. DESPITE HIS SKILL, HE WILL BRING ABOUT HIS OWN DESTRUCTION.
HEHEHEH.



YET... THERE'S THIS STRANGE *FEELING* HE EXUDES? SOMEHOW IT FEELS LIKE I'VE SENSED THIS BEFORE, LONG AGO...
WHAT A FOUL MEMORY...

フエフフフフフフフフフフ
WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE









I CAN'T GET
A SINGLE HIT
THROUGH,
BROTHER JIN.



AW, C'MON. YOUR
DRAW IS REALLY
FAST! 'COURSE...
MINE IS TOO.
HA HA HA!



OUR GRADUATION IS
COMING... AT THIS
RATE, I WON'T BE
ABLE TO SEEK MY
FATHER'S REVENGE.




AFRO... YOU'RE
REALLY GOING OUT
TO GET REVENGE?




YEAH...
THAT'S THE
PLAN.





I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL
AND ALL, BUT IT'S NOT
LIKE GETTING REVENGE
WILL BRING YOUR
FATHER BACK.



SO, LOOK, FORGET
ABOUT REVENGE AND
KEEP TRAINING WITH
ME. WITH SKILLS LIKE
OURS, EARNING FAME
WITH OUR SWORDS ISN'T
JUST A PIPE DREAM,
YOU KNOW.




BRO, I APPRECIATE
THE THOUGHT, BUT
I CAN'T DO THAT.



YOUR PARENTS WERE
KILLED TOO, BROTHER JIN.
DON'T YOU REALLY WANT
REVENGE ALSO?



YEAH...
MAYBE.



BUT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO
BE TRAPPED BY MY ANGER.
MY DREAM IS TO FULFILL THE
DREAMS OF MY FATHER, TO
BECOME A MASTER SWORDSMAN
AND OPEN UP A DOJO.



IF I CAN DO THAT, I'LL
REPAY MASTER FOR EVERY-
THING HE'S DONE FOR ME...
FOR RAISING ME AS HIS
OWN CHILD.




BESIDES, AFRO, WHO KNOWS WHEN YOU'LL BE BACK? THINK OF POOR OTSURI.



WH...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! I THOUGHT YOU TWO WERE GOING TO GET MARRIED.



HAHAHA! SOUNDS LIKE BIG BOY AND KAZUMA HAVE BEEN TELLIN' STORIES AGAIN! BUT NO, I NEVER MADE ANY PROMISE LIKE THAT.



OTSURI IS IN LOVE WITH YOU. AND EVEN SUPPOSING I HAD A CHANCE, I WOULD'VE REFUSED.



BUT YOU FEEL SOMETHING FOR HER, RIGHT?



HEH HEH. I'VE GOT NO TIME FOR WOMEN.



SO THINK ABOUT IT, AFRO! MASTER WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU MAKE A HOME FOR HER TOO, Y'KNOW!



THANK YOU, BROTHER JIN.

BUT I JUST
CAN'T DO THAT.

UNTIL I TAKE REVENGE
FOR MY FATHER, I'LL
NEVER BE ABLE TO MOVE
ON...TO BEGIN ANYTHING
NEW. BUT ONCE THINGS
ARE SETTLED...

I'LL COME BACK
HERE TO BE
WITH OTSURU,
FOREVER.

HA HA!
SO YOU ARE
INTERESTED!

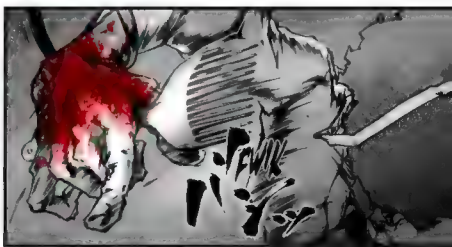
OKAY, OKAY,
SAY NO MORE.

BUT JUST
PROMISE ME
THIS...


COME BACK IN ONE
PIECE AND MAKE
OTSURU HAPPY.

I SWEAR IT!

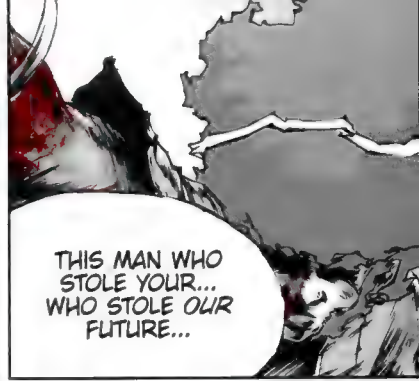








DON'T TELL ME
YOU STILL LOVE
THIS MAN...
OTSURU...



THIS MAN WHO
STOLE YOUR...
WHO STOLE OUR
FUTURE...



HEHEH...HEH...
SO THIS IS REALLY
GOODBYE, AFRO...

XUFF
09

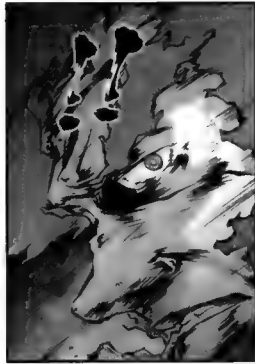
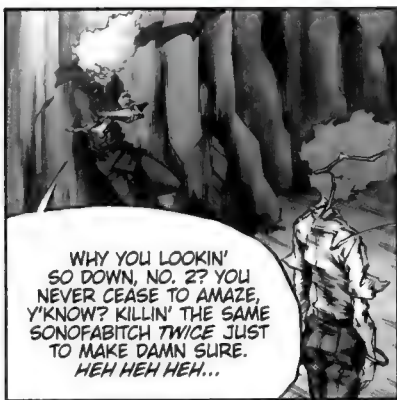


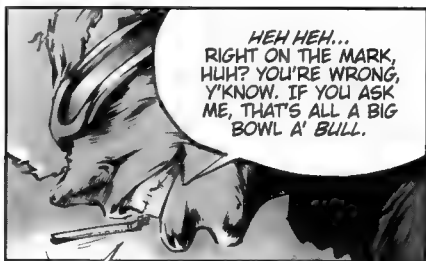
I'M SURE YOU WERE
BOUND TO FIND THIS
OUT SOMETIME... SO
WHY DON'T I JUST
TELL YOU... OTSURU
WAS YOUR...

R. M.
09

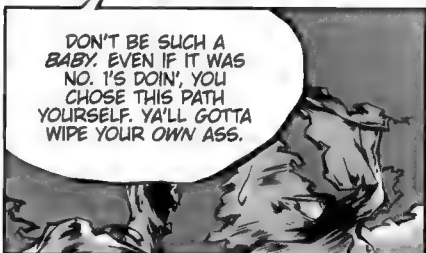


GOODBYE,
BROTHER JIN...





HEH HEH...
RIGHT ON THE MARK,
HUH? YOU'RE WRONG,
Y'KNOW. IF YOU ASK
ME, THAT'S ALL A BIG
BOWL A' BULL.



DON'T BE SUCH A
BABY. EVEN IF IT WAS
NO. I'S DOIN'. YOU
CHOSE THIS PATH
YOURSELF. YA'LL GOTTA
WIPE YOUR OWN ASS.



HEHEHEH, I JUST REMEMBERED
WHY I HAVEN'T KILLED YOUR ASS
YET. WE GOT SHIT TO DO, MAN.
NOW PUT THAT KATANA AWAY
WHERE IT BELONGS.



THE END OF ALL THIS
NOISE IS RIGHT IN
FRONT OF OUR EYES
AND NOSES. NOW
LET'S GET GOIN'.
HEHEHEH.

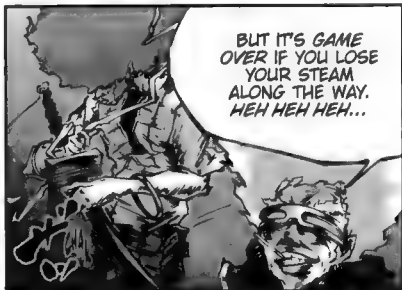
THAT CRACK IN THE CLIFF
GOES ALL THE WAY UP. IT'S
THE ONLY SPOT WHERE A
HUMAN COULD POSSIBLY
CLIMB UP. AND IT LOOKS
HELLA HARD. HEHEHEH.



IT'LL TAKE YOU
TWO TA THREE
DAYS AT LEAST,
EVEN IF YOU BUST
YO' ASS.



BUT IT'S GAME
OVER IF YOU LOSE
YOUR STEAM
ALONG THE WAY.
HEH HEH HEH...



HAPPY
TRAILS,
AFRO!





AFRO SAMURAI

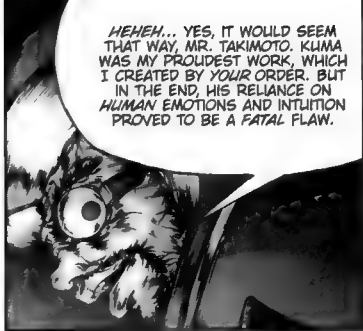
#09



SO HE'S FINALLY HERE.
IT SEEMS WE HAVE NO
CHOICE BUT FOR YOU TO
EXERCISE THE POWER OF
THE GODS...
DHARMAN-SENSEI.



HEHEH... YES, IT WOULD SEEM
THAT WAY, MR. TAKIMOTO. KUMA
WAS MY PROUDEST WORK, WHICH
I CREATED BY YOUR ORDER. BUT
IN THE END, HIS RELIANCE ON
HUMAN EMOTIONS AND INTUITION
PROVED TO BE A FATAL FLAW.

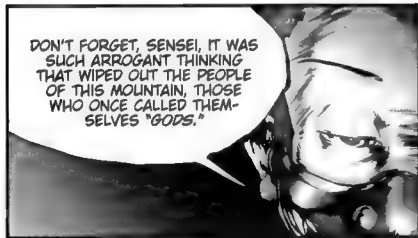


ULTIMATELY, THOSE IMPRECISE
THINGS YOU PUT SO MUCH STOCK
IN SERVE AS NOTHING MORE THAN
FLAWS. NOTHING IS MIGHTIER
THAN THE FUNDAMENTAL "LAWS"
BY WHICH ALL THINGS IN THIS
WORLD OPERATE.



IF WE CAN PERFECTLY
COMPREHEND AND
MANIPULATE THESE LAWS,
NO MATTER HOW COMPLEX
THEY MAY BE, THEN WE MAY
TRULY BECOME GODS.

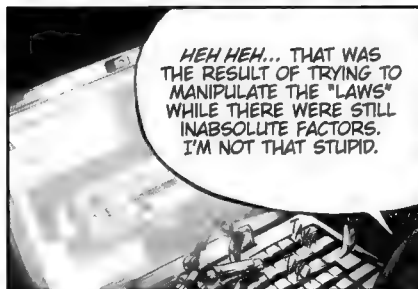
DON'T FORGET, SENSEI, IT WAS
SUCH ARROGANT THINKING
THAT WIPE OUT THE PEOPLE
OF THIS MOUNTAIN, THOSE
WHO ONCE CALLED THEM-
SELVES "GODS."



FORGET YOUR
CONCERNS, MR.
TAKIMOTO.



HEH HEH... THAT WAS
THE RESULT OF TRYING TO
MANIPULATE THE "LAWS"
WHILE THERE WERE STILL
INABSOLUTE FACTORS.
I'M NOT THAT STUPID.



WE'LL TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF NO. 2'S
IMPERFECTIONS
AND BURY HIM ONCE
AND FOR ALL.
HA HA HA!



WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

THIS IS IT, MUTHAFUCKA,
BHAVA-AGRA, THE CITY
OF GODS. NO. 1
RESIDES WITHIN.



FOR A CITY OF GODS,
IT SURE IS NASTY-
LOOKIN', THOUGH.
ALL DESERTED N' SHIT,
TOO. HEH HEH HEH...



SEE THAT GIANT
BUDDHA IN THE MIDDLE?
PEOPLE SAY NO. 1 LIVES
INSIDE ITS HEAD. SOME
CRAZY SHIT, RIGHT?



AT ANY RATE, SEEIN' AS
YOUR OPPONENT IS NO. 1
--AS IN, A GOD--I'M SURE
THEY'VE PUT ON QUITE A
SHOW FOR YOU.



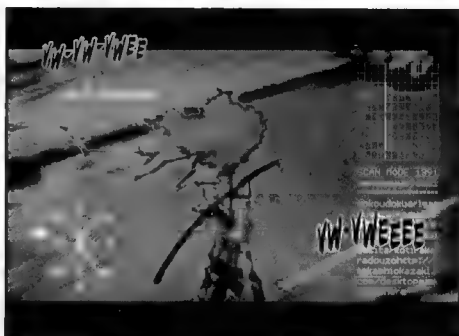
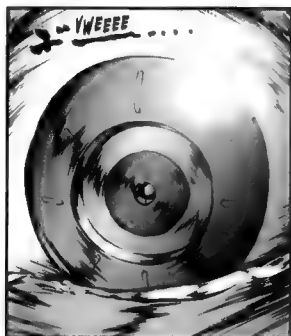
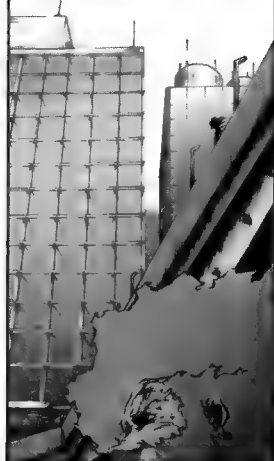
WELP, THAT'S IT FOR
ME. I'M GONNA GO
ON AHEAD, NO. 2.



IF ANYONE CAN
DO THIS, IT'S YOU.
HEH HEH...



NO. 1...



ALL OF THE PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE, MR. TAKIMOTO.

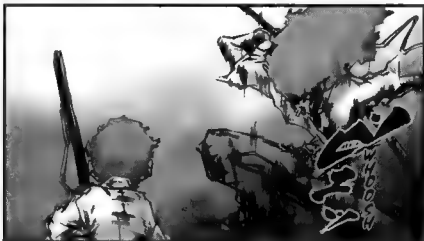
WE'RE READY TO BEGIN ON YOUR CUE. THIS WARRIOR WILL SERVE AS THE PERFECT SUBJECT FOR MY EXPERIMENTATION. HEH HEH HEH.



A MAN SUCH AS
YOURSELF CAN'T BE
ENTRUSTED WITH THE
WHOLE WORLD.



I COULD KILL YOU NOW,
BUT... YOU'VE MADE IT
SO FAR, WHY DON'T I
GIVE YOU A CHANCE?
IF YOU'LL ACCEPT MY
TERMS, THAT IS.



HEH HEH... YOU'RE JUST
LIKE A MAD DOG. I KNOW
YOU'RE EXCITED, BUT YOU
SHOULD AT LEAST HEAR
PEOPLE OUT WHEN THEY
HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY,
NO. 2.



MY TERMS ARE
SIMPLE, NO. 2.



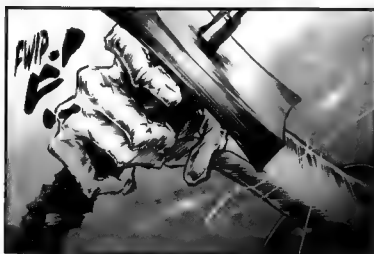
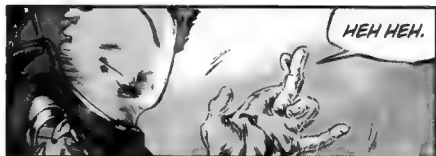
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO
IS JOIN US, HELPING
TO PROTECT NO. 1 AND
THIS MOUNTAIN FROM
ALL WHO THREATEN IT.



HEH HEH...
OF COURSE, WHY
WOULD YOU ACCEPT
SO WILLINGLY?



BUT IT WOULD BE SUCH
A PITY TO JUST KILL
SOMEONE WHO'S COME
THIS FAR, AND WITH THE
HEADBAND, NO LESS.





SO YOU'VE COME HERE TO
SEEK REVENGE FOR YOUR
FATHER. BUT DO YOU KNOW
WHAT KILLING NO. 1 WOULD
DO? DO YOU REALIZE
THE WEIGHT OF THAT
RESPONSIBILITY?

WHATEVER YOU MAY THINK, THE FACT IS YOU CAN'T MOVE RIGHT NOW, SO I BELIEVE YOU'LL HAVE TO HEAR ME OUT. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THAT DAMNED MYTH THAT NO. 1 CAN TAKE CONTROL OF THE WORLD. IF YOU UTILIZE THE POWER LEFT BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS MOUNTAIN WHO CALLED THEMSELVES "GODS," THAT'S EASY ENOUGH TO DO.

YOURS IS A DANGEROUS EXISTENCE. YOU HAVE POWER, AND YET YOU LET YOURSELF BE SWEEPED AWAY BY YOUR OWN DESIRES AND EMOTIONS. IT'S AN EXISTENCE THAT WOULD THROW THE WORLD'S VERY ORDER INTO CHAOS. CONTROLLING INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS YOU IS THE VERY REASON NO. 1 EXISTS. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE MADE THINGS SUCH AS REASON AND COMMON SENSE THE KEY UPON WHICH OUR LIVES REST.

BUT YOUR FATHER, THE NO. 1 OF THE LAST GENERATION, ABANDONED HIS DUTIES.


GRIND

AND SO THE TRAGEDY BEGAN.




HAVING LOST THEIR GOD,
MEN SLAUGHTERED AND
ROBBED ONE ANOTHER,
MOVED SOLELY BY THEIR
OWN GREED.

ONLY THE
STRONG SURVIVED.
IT WAS TRUE HELL
ON EARTH.




IT WAS THE CURRENT
NO. 1 WHO PUT AN END
TO THAT, AND WHO
RESTORED ORDER AND
REASON TO THE WORLD.



YOU MUST HAVE BORN
WITNESS TO THIS YOUR-
SELF THROUGHOUT YOUR
JOURNEY. THIS WORLD
IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN LAUGH
AND LIVE IN PEACE.

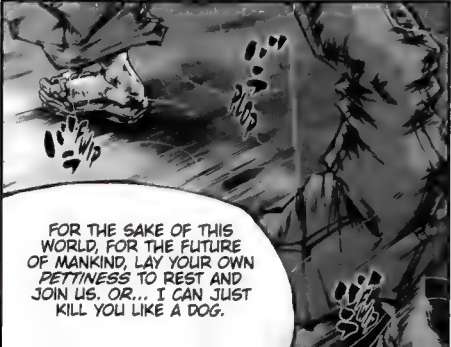
YOU CANNOT
RETURN THIS WORLD
TO CHAOS JUST
FOR THE SAKE OF A
PERSONAL VENDETTA.



BESIDES...
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY
"KILL" NO. 1.
I CAN PROMISE
YOU THAT.

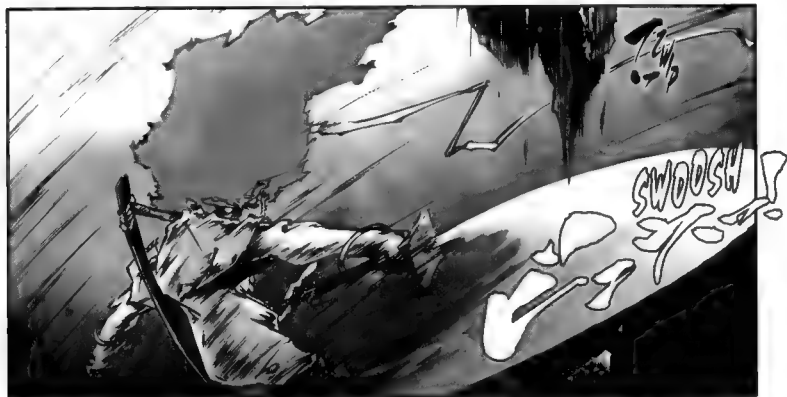


I WON'T DO
EITHER.

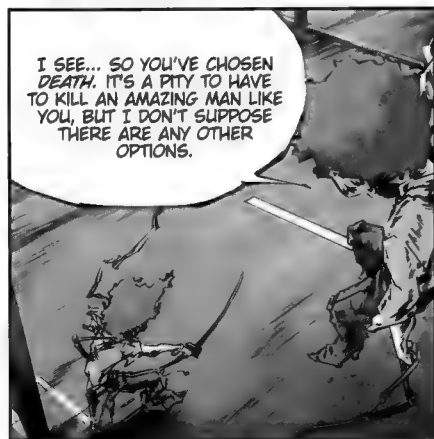


FOR THE SAKE OF THIS
WORLD, FOR THE FUTURE
OF MANKIND, LAY YOUR OWN
PETTINESS TO REST AND
JOIN US. OR... I CAN JUST
KILL YOU LIKE A DOG.

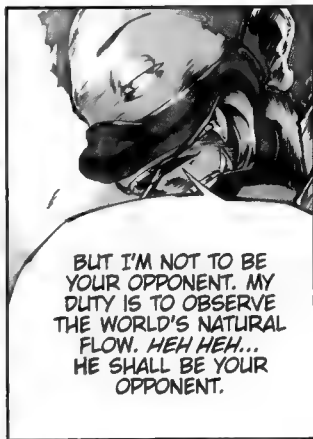
I'LL KEEP FIGHTING,
UNTIL I FIND HIM!



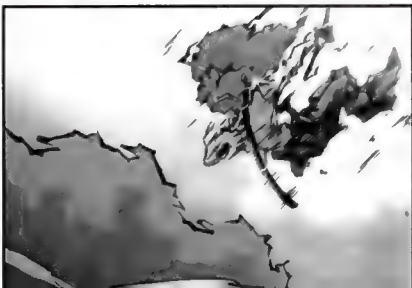
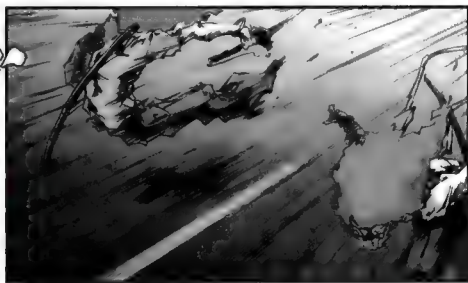
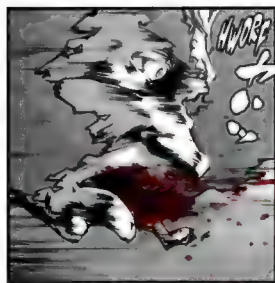
I SEE... SO YOU'VE CHOSEN
DEATH. IT'S A PITY TO HAVE
TO KILL AN AMAZING MAN LIKE
YOU, BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE
THERE ARE ANY OTHER
OPTIONS.



BUT I'M NOT TO BE
YOUR OPPONENT. MY
DUTY IS TO OBSERVE
THE WORLD'S NATURAL
FLOW. HEH HEH...
HE SHALL BE YOUR
OPPONENT.









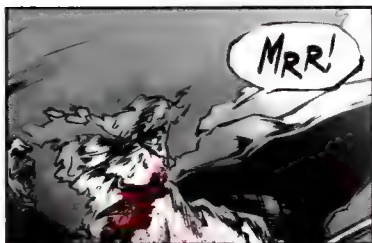
MAAAAN, HE'S GETTIN' FUCKED UP OUT THERE. AIN'T NO WAY THAT'S HIS REAL DAD, BUT HE'S PROBABLY ALL "WELL WHAT IF HE CAME BACK TO LIFE SOMEHOW?" 'N SHIT.



HE'S ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE DIM UPSTAIRS. GUESS THAT PROVES HE'S ONLY HUMAN. HEH HEH HEH.

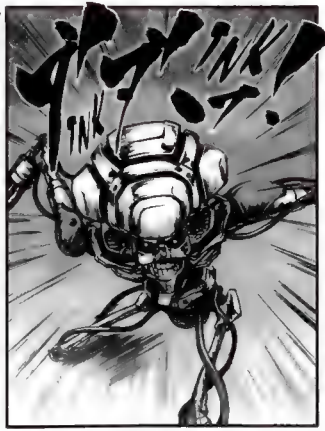


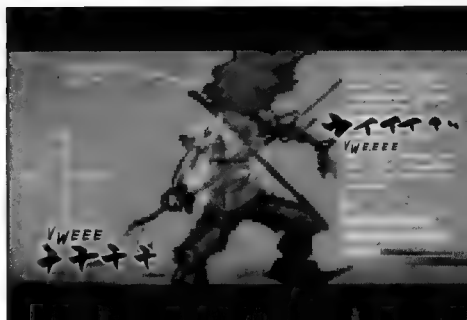
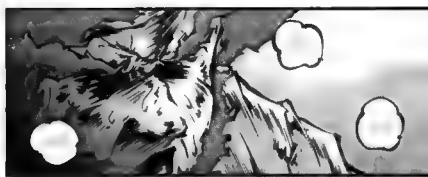
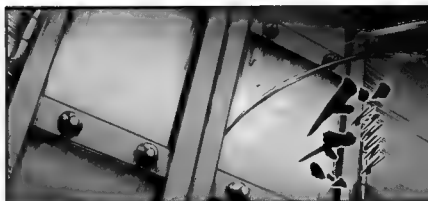




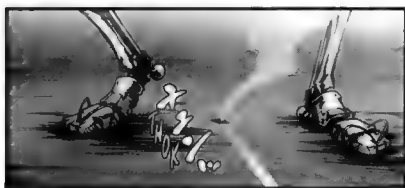
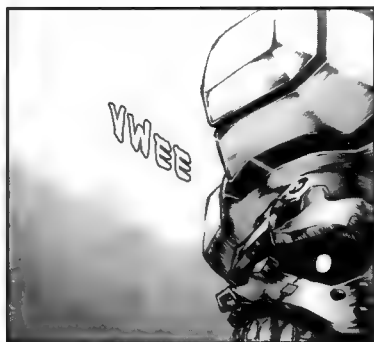


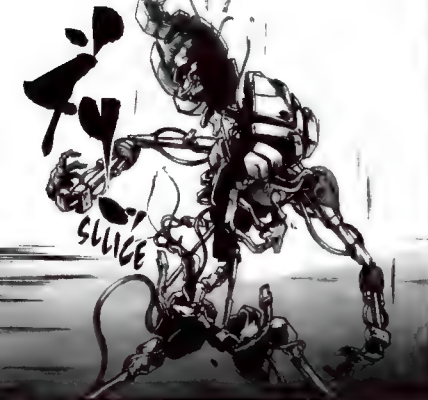


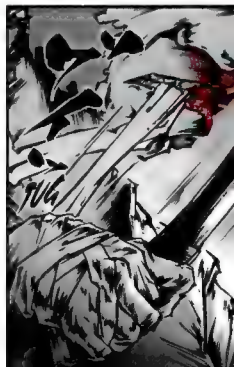
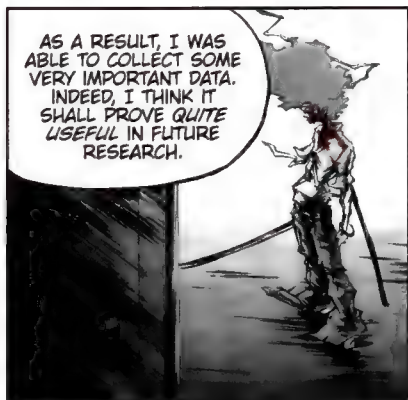












GWAHAHA!
HOW INTERESTING! I SEE I
STILL HAVE *MUCH* TO LEARN
ABOUT HUMANS!!

**KILL HIM,
AFRODROIDS!!**



DDD- DOOM!







AFO SAMURAI

#10







THIS SENSATION...
IT'S THE SAME AS WHAT I FELT
SURROUNDING NO. 2 EARLIER.
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU IS
DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS.
WHO ARE YOU?

OHOHO! MAN, YOU'VE
MADE A GUY HAPPY!
SO YOU CAN SEE ME!
HEH HEH HEH.

BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE
WHO I AM IS ALL THAT
IMPORTANT. WHAT'S
MORE IMPORTANT RIGHT
NOW IS THAT YOU CAN
SEE ME.

YOU'RE NO
NORMAL MAN,
IS YA?
HEHEHEH.

I AM THE SAME AS THAT
DARUMA MONSTROSITY.
I'VE SIGNED A CONTRACT
WITH NO. 1 VOWING TO
PROTECT HIM. THE NAME'S
TAKIMOTO KOUGANSAI.

I CANNOT DIE.

IF TO GREET
DEATH IS HUMAN,
THEN I SUPPOSE A
HUMAN I AM NOT.
FOR YOU SEE...

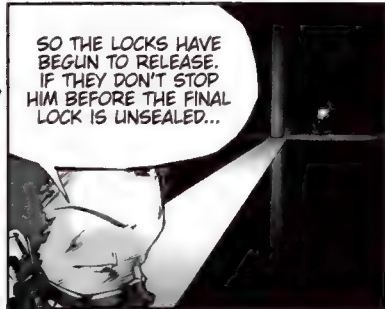
O HO HO... NICE,
MAN! I THINK WE
MIGHT DIG EACH
OTHER.



N...NO!
THE TWELVE
LOCKS!



SO THE LOCKS HAVE
BEGIN TO RELEASE.
IF THEY DON'T STOP
HIM BEFORE THE FINAL
LOCK IS UNSEALED...




'EY! HANG ON A
SEC', TAKIMOTO!



SORRY, DUDE, BUT I
CAN'T LET YOU GO.
HEH HEH HEH...



OHO...SO THAT'S THE
WAY IT IS AFTER ALL.
WHY DO YOU SIDE
WITH NO. 2?



DO YOU REALIZE
WHAT KILLING NO. 1
WOULD MEAN?



HEHEH...
DON'T ACT LIKE YOU
KNOW ME, BRA. I AIN'T
TAKIN' HIS SIDE, OR
ANYONE ELSE'S.



I JUST DO
WHAT I WANT.



MMHMM...
I NEVER THOUGHT
YOU'D MAKE IT
THIS FAR.



GO,
AFRODROID
#1!



SO YOU'VE
DECIDED YOU'D
LIKE TO KILL
ME?

WELL,
I GUESS YOU
COULD SAY
THAT.



HUMANS CANNOT
SURVIVE WITHOUT
A GOD TO CONTROL
THEM. THAT'S THE
TRUTH OF THINGS.

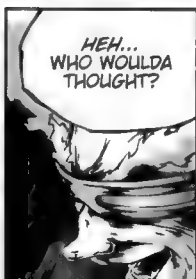
TO PROTECT THE
WORLD ORDER,
I CAN'T JUST
IGNORE YOU.



HMPH...
BESIDES, TRYING
TO KILL ME IS
FUTILE.



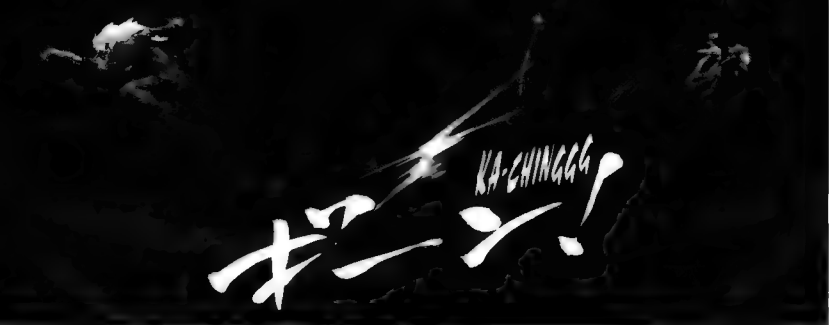
I AM AN
UNKILLABLE
MAN.



HEH...
WHO WOULD
A THOUGHT?



Y'KNOW...
I REALLY HATE
THAT ABOUT
YOU.

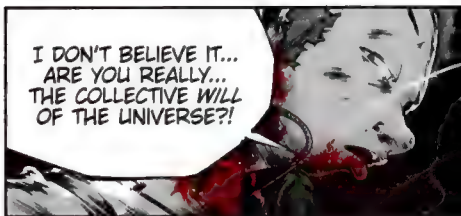




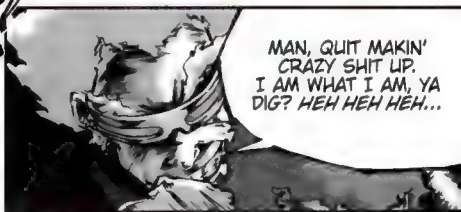
NO!
THE FINAL
LOCK!!

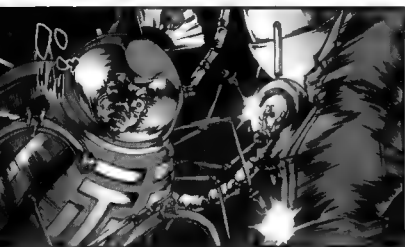
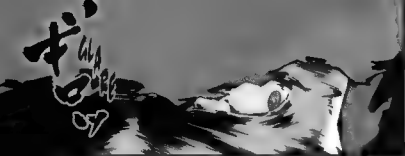


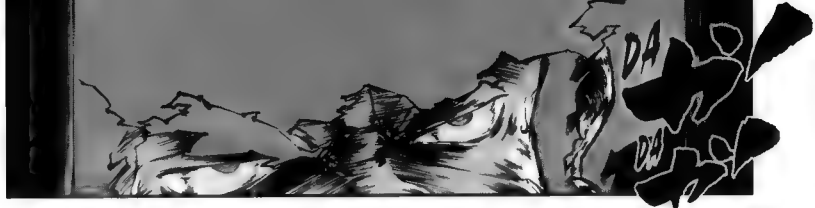
I DON'T BELIEVE IT...
ARE YOU REALLY...
THE COLLECTIVE WILL
OF THE UNIVERSE?!



MAN, QUIT MAKIN'
CRAZY SHIT UP.
I AM WHAT I AM, YA
DIG? HEH HEH HEH...









ガッ
RRRRRRMM

BBBLE





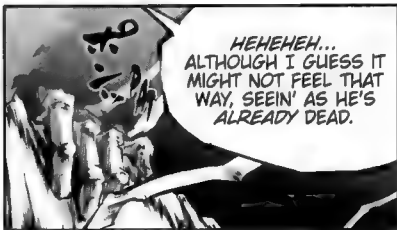








SO YOU'VE FINALLY
TAKEN REVENGE FOR
YOUR FATHER, RIGHT,
NO. 2?!



HEHEHEH...
ALTHOUGH I GUESS IT
MIGHT NOT FEEL THAT
WAY, SEEN' AS HE'S
ALREADY DEAD.



YOU JOURNEYED
SO FAR FOR THIS?
YOU MIGHT AS WELL
HAVE BEEN CHASIN'
YOUR OWN TAIL..
HEH HEH HEH...

BUT HEY, CAN'T
ARGUE WITH IT.
JUST GOTTA
ACCEPT IT, RIGHT?



AND YOU'VE GOTTA
ACCEPT THE NEW
REALITY AS WELL.
THAT IS TO SAY...



FROM HERE ON OUT,
YOU ARE NO. 1!
YOU'RE THIS
WORLD'S GOD!
BADASS, YEH?

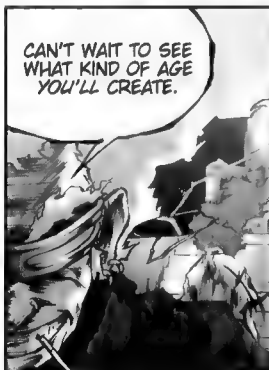
NO. 1 CONTROLS THIS
WORLD. THAT'S AN
ABSOLUTE RULE.



YOU CAN'T JUST GO ON
DEPENDING ON DEAD
PEOPLE FOREVER, KNOW
WHAT I'M SAYIN'?
HEH HEH HEH...



CAN'T WAIT TO SEE
WHAT KIND OF AGE
YOU'LL CREATE.

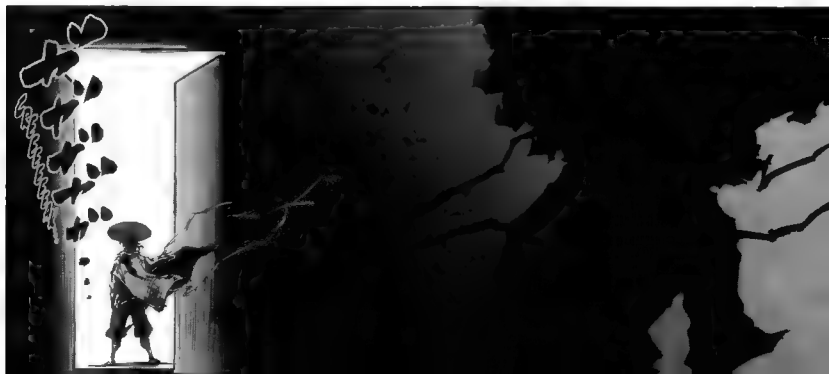
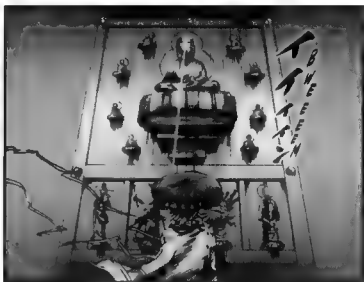


MAKE
SURE YOU DO
THINGS RIGHT!
EHEHEHEH...



CLANG





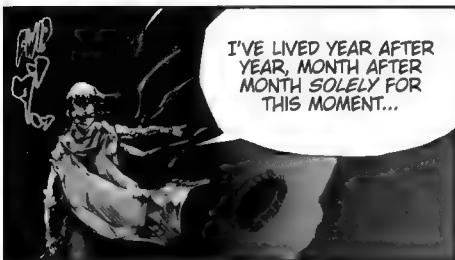
I'VE FINALLY FOUND
YOU, NO. 1. DO YOU
REMEMBER ME?!



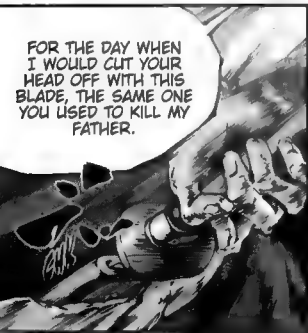
YOU KILLED MY FATHER
RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES,
WHEN I WAS ONLY A
LITTLE KID!



I'VE LIVED YEAR AFTER
YEAR, MONTH AFTER
MONTH SOLELY FOR
THIS MOMENT...



FOR THE DAY WHEN
I WOULD CUT YOUR
HEAD OFF WITH THIS
BLADE, THE SAME ONE
YOU USED TO KILL MY
FATHER.



ACCEPT MY
CHALLENGE,
NO. 1!!



DO AS
YOU LIKE.



HM?



I...IF YOU WANT TO
KILL ME, KILL ME.



IS THIS REALLY
THE MAN WHO...



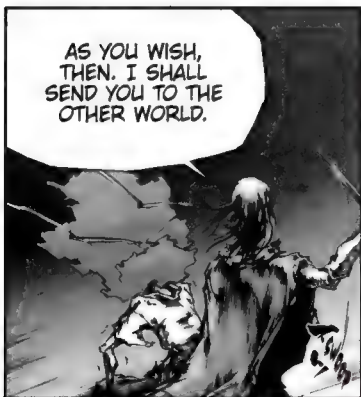
KILLED MY
FATHER...?



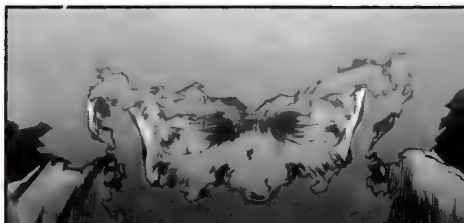
WHAT A
MISERABLE
SIGHT.



AS YOU WISH,
THEN. I SHALL
SEND YOU TO THE
OTHER WORLD.

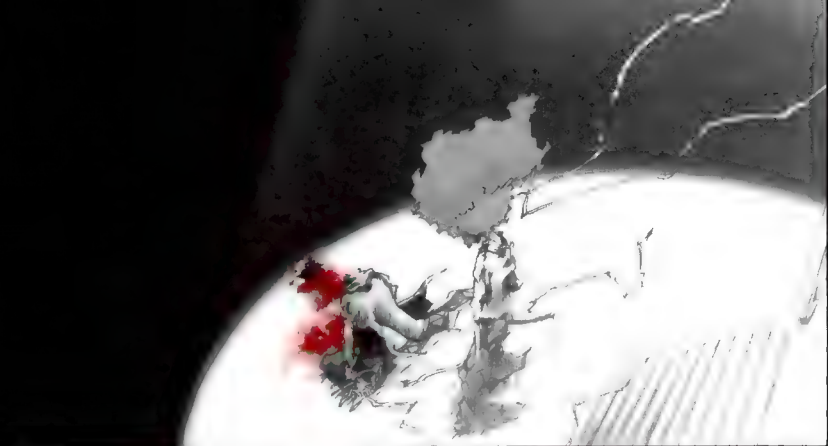


DIE, NO. 1!



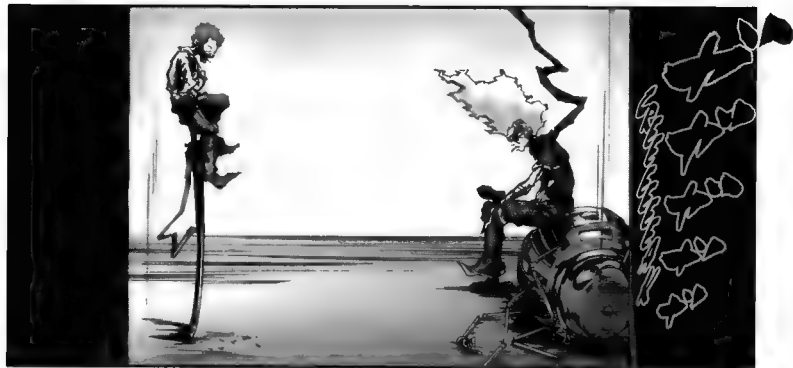












SO YOU'VE FINALLY
BECOME A REAL LIVE GOD.
A NEW AGE BEGINS TODAY,
AND I'LL STAKE MY OWN
LIFE TO PROTECT IT--
AND YOU.

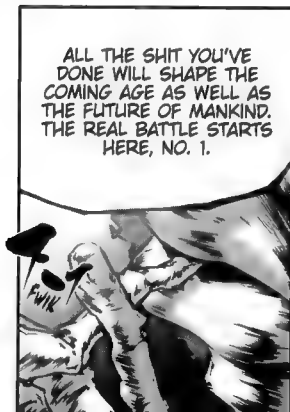


HEHEH... IT SEEMS IT
WAS WORTH THE WAIT.
YOU'VE FINALLY ACCEPTED
YOUR DESTINY, NO. 1,
YOU OL' BASTARD.



YOUR BLOOD
WON'T LET
YOU DIE.

ALL THE SHIT YOU'VE
DONE WILL SHAPE THE
COMING AGE AS WELL AS
THE FUTURE OF MANKIND.
THE REAL BATTLE STARTS
HERE, NO. 1.



WHILE YOU'VE BEEN
HOLED UP IN HERE,
LIKE A PUSSY, THE
WORLD OUT THERE'S
GONE TO SHIT.



SO...
WHERE TO BEGIN?
HEH HEH HEH...





I'LL JUST...
KEEP MOVING
FORWARD...

DDDD-

DOOM!!



HONORIFICS GUIDE

Politeness is an integral facet of Japanese culture, and we believe that maintaining honorifics—polite speech that indicates a person's status or relationship toward another individual—in our translations helps bring out the same character nuances as seen in the original work.

In *Afro Samurai*, the common honorifics that you will come across while reading are:

-san – The most common of all honorifics, it is an all-purpose suffix that can be used in any situation where politeness is expected. Generally seen as the equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs., etc.

-sama – This suffix is one level higher than “-san” and is used to confer great respect upon an individual.

-chan – Another common honorific. This suffix is mainly used to express endearment toward girls, but can also be used when referring to little boys or even pets. Couples are also known to use the term to convey a sense of cuteness and intimacy.

Sensei – Literally meaning “one who has come before,” this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.



TRANSLATION NOTES

Chapter 6, Page 6

In both the manga and anime of *Afro Samurai*, Afro is seen having grown up with a character who wears glasses. The manga's version of this character is a long-winded brainiac named Kazuma, while the character of Sasuke in the anime is seen to be much more of a normal kid.

Chapter 6, Page 8

Wakizashi are traditional Japanese swords that are similar to *katana*, but are much shorter (30 to 60cm, whereas a *katana* is anything over 60cm).

In feudal Japan, *wakizashi* and *katana* were often worn together as a pair known as *daishō*.

Chapter 6, Page 11

Afureru is a Japanese verb meaning to overflow, to run over the brim. As you can see, Afro's hair will soon overflow his head and run over the brim of his headband.

Chapter 7, Page 20

Hachimaki are Japanese headbands. These are what everyone is killing each other over in *Afro Samurai*.

Chapter 9, Page 4

In Buddhism, *Bhava-agra* is the highest level of material existence that one can reach; the fourth heaven. The Japanese word for this place would be *Uchouten* (or *Yuuchouten*).

Chapter 10, Page 4

Daruma (or *dharama*) are hollow, round wish dolls common in Japan. They are molded on the founder of Zen, Bodhidharma, and feature a mustache and beard, but the eyes are left unpainted. When making a wish, you paint in the right eye, but leave the left eye blank until your wish is fulfilled.

The character of Daruman is a pun that combines the words "Daruma" and the word "man."



Takashi Okazaki: The Man BEHIND the 'Fro

Afro Samurai originally started in the doujinshi magazine *Nou Nou Hau*. Tell us a little about that experience.

It was around 1999-2000. After I graduated from college, I started working as an illustrator. Drawing for clients was not the same as drawing what my heart wanted to express. Several of my friends in the field shared the same frustration. We blabbered drunkenly and said "what if we pay ourselves to draw what we really want to draw." That was the beginning of *Nou Nou Hau*. It started small, with a group of close friends, but I knew it'd be *Afro Samurai* for me. We all enjoyed the balance between our main jobs and the hobby. After the second issue more friends joined, and we were up to nine artists at one point. *Nou Nou Hau* was brought to a close when we could no longer support the printing costs, as it was not our principal to draw for sponsorship.

The version of the manga that we're publishing is actually a relaunched version of your original doujinshi. How did this relaunch come about?

It started when we began the *Afro Samurai* project with GONZO; in the anime series we had to have mainstream entertainment elements added for the new audience. When I saw Afro animated and voiced for the first time, it felt like he left my nest. In the manga, I focused on showcasing my original *Afro Samurai*. So in essence, the manga is a relaunch of the doujinshi, but the world is bigger and the settings are stronger.

From start to finish, how long does it generally take you to complete a single page, and what's your basic process?

It took three years from the start of page one to the end of volume two. This comes out to 300 pages of art, so a simple calculation gives about three days per page!

The manga version of *Afro Samurai* diverges quite drastically from the anime version, spiraling the story into a different direction. Is this a case where your doujinshi became the basis for the anime or did you always plan for the manga to go in the direction seen in this book?

The doujinshi version of *Afro Samurai*, the current manga version, the anime version, and the game version all have slight differences from each other, but the core concept is the same. Each represents a unique world and story. Such multiple worlds coexist within the *Afro Samurai* universe, and I allowed the series to be that way from the beginning. So you can be sure that there are many more stories waiting to be told in Afro Universe.

As for the relaunch, I gained a lot more experience and knowledge during the years after finishing the doujinshi, so you can say the new manga is slightly more *otona* (adult) than the previous doujin version! (laughs)

Why did you draw *Afro Samurai* left-to-right, instead of the traditional Japanese orientation, right-to-left?

Afro Samurai was originally intended to be published as a traditional American comic book, so the pages were drawn full-size, left-to-right. It was a challenge to follow this style, though, as even the word balloons were done horizontally whereas typical Japanese manga text reads vertically and right-to-left.

In your opinion, what is the difference between Japanese manga and American comics and in which category does *Afro Samurai* fall?

As is often pointed out, Japanese manga use a style with cinematic camera angles, which was developed by the legendary manga artist Osamu Tezuka. Each frame represents a snapshot and an action. Each line and piece of dialogue is paired with a corresponding action, and it is shown visually frame-by-frame.



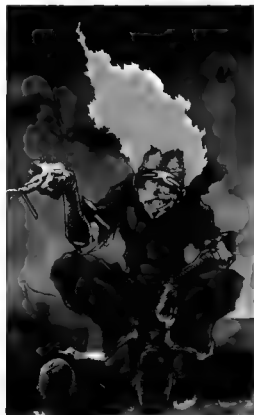
On the other hand, American comics are graphic novels. The story is there and inspirational visuals are there, but the dialogue and visual actions are not necessarily in sync in that way.

I think *Afro Samurai* has elements from both, and that is something not many people have done.

Is there a particular part of the manga that was your favorite to work on, and why?

My favorite is Episode #6. I also liked working on Episode #2.

These particular episodes of the manga are kind of side stories. Unlike the core story arc chapters, which I had thought through and polished up in my head a long time ago, the side story episodes had very particular themes to them and they allowed me to pursue some creative storytelling ideas and design details while also allowing me to incorporate new elements into the series itself. It was a great feeling to be able to bring *Afro Samurai* to the next level. They're essential chapters to the mythology, and I'm very happy with how episode #6 turned out. I look forward to seeing reader's response to these chapters.



In terms of your characters, what is it about the character of Afro that you like and do you see any aspects of yourself in him?

While my characters don't directly represent my experiences or personality, they are built from my subjective imagination. Of course, I couldn't draw something I'd never seen or felt or imagined, so it is possible that memories from my past influence my character expressions to some extent more than I am aware.

How do you feel now that your manga has become a sprawling franchise that spans two anime, a video game, and with a live-action movie in the works?

I want the franchise to have a variety like that seen in *Batman*.

And finally, what's your all-time favorite manga and who's your favorite artist?

I have a couple of favorite series that have given me inspiration for *Afro Samurai*. These are:
Lone Wolf and Cub
Watchmen
Batman: Year One
Kamui Gaiden
Hi no tori

STATS:

BLOOD TYPE: AB

• **FAVORITE PASTIMES:**

Watch movies, eat good food, and play mahjong/video games

• **WHAT IS YOUR TYPICAL DAY LIKE:**

I wake up, make a cup of coffee with a lot of milk, and work in my home office with coffee, chocolates or ice cream, and a 1.5-liter Volvic (mineral water). And I don't come out of my office for several hours.

• **WHAT WOULD I BE DOING IF I DIDN'T KNOW ART:**

Cooking. I wanted to be a chef before I got into contemporary art.

• **WHAT I LIKE ABOUT ART:**

I like how conceptual art leaves room for the imagination of viewers. My favorite artists are Bruce Nauman and Antony Gormley.

• **MY MOTTO / FAVORITE WORDS:**

“上善如水” and “坐忘”
("Be like Water" and "Remembering to Forget")

• **MY TREASURES:**

My family, everyone who helped *Afro Samurai*, the action figure signed by Sam J, the Afro T-shirt Sam J recently gave me.

CREATOR BIO

TAKASHI OKAZAKI

Born in 1974 in Kanagawa, Japan.
Graduated from Tama Art University with a BA in Sculpture.

Okazaki's field of creative activity focuses on illustrations but also extends to manga, CD jacket design, sculpture, and live painting performance.

AFRO SAMURAI was originally a doujinshi manga by Okazaki that first appeared in the independent magazine *Nou Nou Hau*, and was then made into an animated TV series by GONZO. The series stars Samuel L. Jackson (who is also one of the Executive Producers), and is furnished with music composed by the hip-hop maestro RZA. After the successful US broadcast on Spike TV in 2007, the show was edited for theatrical release in Japan. DVDs are now available in six countries. Its adaptation into a Hollywood live-action film is also under way.

Representative Works:

- Designed "Metro-Taro," a fictional mascot character used in the live-action film *Negotiator* *Mashita Masayoshi*
- Designed "Wangan-kun," a fictional mascot character used in the live-action film *Bayside Shakedown 2*
- Provided concept design and key art for the fictional animation that appears in the live-action film *Space Travelers*
- Provided design for CD jacket and concert merchandise of Japanese rock band RIZE
- Provided artwork for the special edition of *Spider-Man 2* DVD
- Provided comic drawings for booklet of *Blade: Trinity* soundtrack CD



Death isn't the end . . . it's only the beginning.

BRUTALLY WOUNDED in his battle against the teddy-bear-headed master swordsman Kuma, Afro awakens to find himself in the care of a village of people who have each been stricken by tragedy. Yet, unlike Afro, instead of letting their lives become overpowered by the thirst for revenge, they have embraced the teachings of "the One" and found peace.

Their peaceful lives are soon to change forever, for wherever Afro Samurai treads...violence is never far behind.

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